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**ON THIS
WE BUILD
IN AFRICA**



By L. K. ANDERSON

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WE WOULD BE BUILDING

*We would be building; temples still undone
O'er crumbling walls their crosses scarcely lift;
Waiting till love can raise the broken stone,
And hearts creative bridge the human rift;
We would be building,
Master, let Thy plan
Reveal the life that God would give to man.*

*Teach us to build; upon the solid rock
We set the dream that hardens into deed,
Ribbed with the steel that time and change doth mock,
Th' unfailing purpose of our noblest creed;
Teach us to build;
O Master, lend us sight
To see the towers gleaming in the light.*

*O keep us building, Master: may our hands
Ne'er falter when the dream is in our hearts.
When to our ears there come divine commands
And all the pride of sinful will departs:
We build with Thee,
O grant enduring worth
Until the heavenly Kingdom comes on earth.*

PAUL E. DEITZ

Quoted from *The Hymnal for Youth*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia.



AFRICA



P R O L O G U E

JOHN KAREFA-SMART

THE FRINGE of tropical rain-forest between the Atlantic coastline and the Sahara Desert, from Cape Verde to the Camerouns, constitutes a somewhat homogeneous section about which it is comparatively safe to make general statements in answer to the question, "What has the church meant to the life of the people?"

With the exception of a few isolated places on the coast where the history of the Christian community goes back to the adventurous priests who accompanied the Portuguese navigators of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, or the returned emancipated slaves of the eighteenth century, the rest of the church in West Africa owes its birth to the coming of missionaries from Europe and America during the last century, and well over 50 per cent of the members of the Christian communities are first-generation Christians.

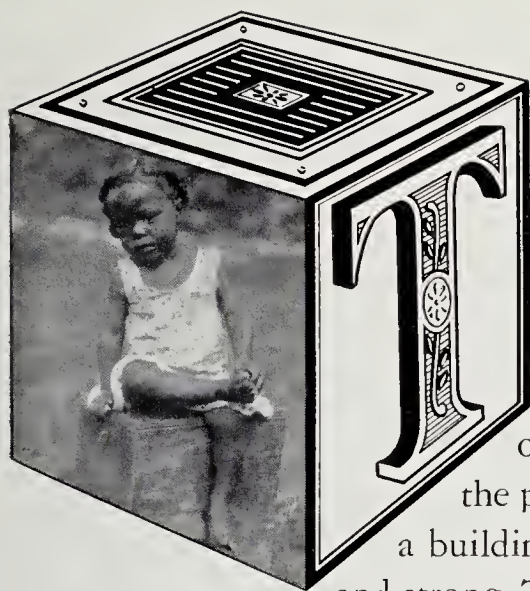
Yet, everywhere, the small minorities of Christians are affecting the thought and life of the entire community, and the positions of leadership and responsibility which Christians hold reflect in a measure the influence of the church on life.

Education, from the village school with instruction in vernacular to the technical schools and colleges of university status, has always been nearly 100 per cent a contribution of Christian missions. So have been

medical services and institutions, as well as advances in the standard of living of the people, through such means as improved agriculture.

The West Africa Christian may be a village farmer, a clerk in a government office, or an independent trader; she may be a simple housewife, or a teacher or a medical assistant; he may be a doctor, a lawyer, or a customs officer; a traveling evangelist or a bishop, or the paramount chief of a tribe of several hundred thousand persons; but whoever they may be, they will tell you that they owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the missionary enterprise which brought them the gospel of Jesus.

The future of the church in West Africa will be in the hands of these people. Already they are furnishing in increasing numbers the native leadership which makes a self-governing church possible, and they are well on the way to maintaining a self-supporting church in many places. Besides, the church of West Africa has since its earliest days been a missionary, or sending church, itself. The African Christians have marched side by side with their American and European missionary friends at the front lines of the advancing frontiers of the light of the gospel of Jesus, and they will continue now and in the future to look to their American and European missionary friends to be their colleagues and co-workers in the on-going work of the church of Jesus in West Africa.



ON THIS WE BUILD IN AFRICA

L. K. ANDERSON

THE DEVELOPMENT of the spiritual life of a nation resembles, in a striking way, the processes involved in the construction of a building. The foundations must be laid deep and strong. The softer and more pliable the ground, the deeper and more complicated becomes the underpinning, reaching down to bedrock. The higher and more elevated the structure, the wider and more substantial must be the base. The superstructure has many ramifications adapted to the uses for which the building is intended, quite different in appearance from the groundwork and yet all is knitted and fitted together into a unit, giving honor to the designer and proving its worth in the purposes for which it was designed. It is no chance that in describing the church of Jesus Christ frequent use has been made of the illustration—a building.

To the Cameroun, West Africa, the first missionaries came in the year 1889. Their task of laying the foundations of the kingdom in that part of Africa was no sinecure. Beset by ills within and perils without they built the base deep and strong. Certain of the elements used in this construction were imported from abroad, other native materials were wisely adapted to modern construction. African huts, made of material taken from the forest are, at best, temporary shelters easily destroyed by the busy burrowing termite and the fury of tropical storm. Modern cities in Africa are built of imperishable steel and cement. But to mix the cement, African sand is used, well mixed with the waters of African streams, and it is African hands that mix the mortar and lay the bricks. The missionaries brought with them the cementing unity of love which fastened

to the bedrock of the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ, is unshakable. There is but one solid rock the world around. Seas separate and lands divide, but encircling the globe, under all barriers lies the eternal rock of our salvation, the hope of all mankind.

They laid then, these missionaries, the foundations of the church in the Cameroun, on the Eternal Rock. With Christian love contained in the gospel message mixed with the glistening sand of the African's innate religious character and sensibility the groundwork became broad and deep, largely through the efforts of the Africans themselves. The early missionary soon saw that only through ordained and unordained leadership could the uniting of the gospel with the fertile hearts of the people be accomplished. They planned well, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. On these broad foundations the superstructure has risen high above the ground and one is amazed at the size, the length, and the breadth of the work of the kingdom that has risen amid the jungles and grass lands of the Cameroun. A study of the success of missionary endeavor throughout the world as determined by the number of communicant members in proportion to the mission force involved highlights this small section of Africa, above almost any other mission field.

They have built well, but what of the future? Leaving these first principles, these foundations, and pressing on unto perfection, what will be the church's plan for the future? The superstructure will be built of the same materials as the foundations but the aspect may be entirely different albeit well adapted to the needs of the day.

Quite naturally, the development of the church in Cameroun centered around the ordained foreign missionaries who immediately began a systematic and thorough program for the development of a national ordained leadership. Some men who proved unfit to assume the responsibilities of an educated ministry were used in a widespread plan of lay evangelism, until every major town and hamlet in South Cameroun boasted its local evangelist and school teacher. The missionary pastor became an itinerant supervisor, with

sometimes dozens of these villages to visit in the course of the year, to advise, help, and perform the sacraments. Little by little the African pastors increased in knowledge and numbers sufficiently to undertake a part of this supervisory work. At the same time the training of competent ruling elders progressed and the older churches developed into self-supporting organizations with missionary programs for the unevangelized interior tribes.

This then is the church superstructure as we see it today. The Africans are naturally insisting that the leadership of their church be entirely African with the foreign missionary aiding in an advisory capacity. It is sometimes difficult for a missionary, used to following his own judgment and planning the church program his own way, to step aside and let his African colleague do things another way. The superstructure, built on the early foundations, is not always what was foreseen by those who laid the foundations. They perhaps saw something American projected into the future. Something decidedly African is developing, for which we are grateful.

What of the future of this imposing Church of Christ in Cameroun? It is now a Synod, under the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., comprising three presbyteries. A fourth presbytery may soon be organized in the Spanish territory (Spanish Guinea) just south of the Cameroun border. The time may not be far distant when the General Assembly of the Church of Christ in Cameroun will come into being, perhaps under some other name, perhaps with an organization following some distinctly tribal pattern more in keeping with the African custom and habit. In any event the buttresses of the mighty walls are strong and solid. The church raises aloft its mighty towers, lifting high the Cross of Jesus Christ above the shadows of teeming jungles below, and yet reaching out into the lives and hearts of all the tribes for strength to build and the will to sacrifice.

But the building of the kingdom has not been in the church alone. If the building is to be done by Africans then hands must be

trained and minds attuned to the voice of the Master Builder. Again the foundations of all the educational work were dug deep and wide. It was all very primitive at first. Little tots there were with squirming toes in muddy floors, scratching charcoal on wooden boards for pen and paper, in isolated little bark schools—all that is hidden now beneath the neat rows of brick buildings at fifteen major stations in the mission field. One of the sustaining bases of it all has been the ability to teach throughout the years in the African vernacular for the first three years of every child's life. The textbook is the New Testament. As long as succeeding governments countenance this practice, the success of the mission's and the church's educational system is assured. Governments have changed in the history of our mission in Cameroun, which involved the necessary change in the official language of the country. The Presbyterian Mission has been the one continuing and stabilizing factor in a fluctuating scene, teaching the people to read in their own language and providing literature for them at a mission press. It is no wonder that the mission's reputation as a benefactor and leader in education is well established.

It is a far cry from the early primitive bush schools to the present well integrated and elaborate educational system of the mission. There are still the hundreds upon hundreds of tiny primary schools in the jungle villages, but every child has the opportunity to pass on to a central school where the rudiments of French are taught. From that point promotion is rapid if he shows aptitude, and he progresses to one of the station schools, to a junior high school from which he can choose whether he will go on to the Normal, Evangelistic, or Industrial School. The Theological Seminary, with its new building in a beautiful setting, draws upon the graduates of the Normal School for its students, who must pass rigid postgraduate training tests before ordination is possible.

In addition, an agricultural program is being integrated into the whole school system. Central Africa is and will be for years to come

an agricultural region and the mission would be failing in its responsibilities if adequate agricultural training were not provided. Special mention must be made of the development of the agricultural project instituted by a missionary who caught a vision of the possibilities of Christian service for the African from an agricultural course taken at Cornell University on his last furlough. Blights and famine resulting from crop failures are now demonstrated to be the result of bacteria and not the curse of an evil spirit. The liberating power of the gospel is now permeating the humble everyday tasks of the child of God as well as his conscience and intellect. In addition to this the experimental farm at Metet is filling a very real need of isolated missionaries. New uses of native foods are being developed to replace canned goods, now unobtainable. The soy bean with its limitless adaptations is now being used in countless ways, from pie-filler to milk for the untainted children of leprous mothers.

Thus far the program has been adequate to meet the immediate needs of the community. Again reverting to the illustration of the building, the superstructure of the whole educational system shows that the ground work has been well done and the rising walls, everywhere in evidence, show virile and rapid growth. But this is not enough. To stop here would be to leave rough and jagged walls unfinished. Until the opportunity is given to young men and women of French Equatorial Africa to avail themselves of the best in education, this building cannot be considered complete. The young people of all Africa are going to demand it, and alien forces will not be slow to offer ideologies and teachings quite foreign to the type of thing for which the foundations have been laid.

A college under Christian auspices is the answer to the insistent cry rising from the hearts of African youth—a college in which men and women will be fitted to become leaders in a postwar world uninhibited by traditional educational inferiority or lack of adequate training. When Africa rises from her centuries of gloomy

mystery into the prominence in international affairs to which she must surely come, God grant that trained leaders will be there who know Christ and have learned to seek his will in the affairs of state.

The building in education awaits its completion in what has come to be known as the Institut des Missions Evangeliques (Institute of Evangelical Missions). It too must largely be an African contribution, and distinctly fitted to African life and culture. There is at present a lack of material with which to build, a serious lack of both missionary and national personnel. There are many conflicting ideas on the best methods to be followed. Too much delay may be fatal. The mission with its well-founded educational system stands at the door of a magnificent opportunity which it must not miss if it is to carry to full fruition the plan so wisely inaugurated by the first missionaries to the Cameroun.

The Dager Biblical Seminary and Evangelists' School at Lolodorf (MacLean Station) is the only school now specializing in the training of indigenous leadership. With the increased demand for competent ordained men and lay workers to assume responsible positions in the new church organization, this department is going to be taxed to the limit. The necessary qualifications for entrance are being constantly raised to assure competent leadership.

Increasing emphasis is being made on the Christian approach to home and family life. Many of the stations report encouraging efforts in demonstrating the implications of the Christian home. The effects of Christian living have long been a demonstration of the power of the gospel to change an individual in Africa but the home has not always shared to the fullest in the benefits that follow.

The Frank James Industrial School in Elat is enlarging its program of fitting the youth of Cameroun to meet the demands of modern civilization. Plans are being developed to make this school self-contained and not dependent on commercial enterprises through which the apprentices have formerly been trained.

The Halsey Memorial Press (also in Elat), in spite of increasing

difficulty in securing the paper necessary for producing their usual output of periodicals and textbooks, has continued to be a very important asset to the mission's effective witness. Besides the school textbooks, Sunday school helps, and monthly magazines, the press has printed tracts and aids for the annual Bible conference and the regular mission quarterly, "The Drum Call." All of the work of this valuable institution is done by skilled African workmen under the supervision of a missionary.

It is an interesting fact that the first medical missionaries sent by the Board to foreign fields had as their major objective the care of the missionary. Casualties in missionary personnel were exceedingly high in those early days and it was a measure of plain economy to protect the lives of the missionaries in this way. However, it soon became apparent that no Christian missionary with medical skill could stand silently by and see the people to whom the missionary had been sent, suffer and die for want of medical attention. He soon became engaged in a full-time ministry of healing and hospitals were built and medical schools established.

In the Cameroun the doctors did yeoman service in one of the most unhealthy regions of the world. The doctors were soon involved in a battle not only against disease and filth but against superstition and fear. The test often developed not against infections and contagion but between missionary and witch doctor. Christ's injunction to heal as well as to preach and teach became a matter of necessity as much as of sound doctrine and procedure.

Again the foundations struck deep down through this morass of mire and filth to the rock upon which all permanent structures must be based. The medical service of the mission could have been attributed to the skill of science or the cunning of the white man, but these ministers of healing ever pointed to the One who is the author of all knowledge and is himself the great Healer. And so, in this instance as in that of the church development and the educational system, Christ became the center of the entire medical ap-

proach to the African. And this was natural—the African attributed disease to evil spirits and the cure for any disease lay in the supernatural. How very natural then to be cured by one who claimed his skill from the power of the eternal Son of God.

Little by little the medical work of the mission has spread throughout the whole region. The governments of the country—German, French, and Free French in succession—have been unable to cope with the tremendous need in a country where sleeping sickness, leprosy, and yaws are as prevalent as any place in the world. Fortunately a fair amount of drugs and supplies has reached the field so that the service of hospitals and dispensaries has been unimpaired. Greater and greater responsibility has been placed on the half dozen mission doctors and nurses who carry on their work in their station hospitals and who make periodic trips to other districts to hold clinics and consultations. Here again much has depended on the African helper. There are no medical schools as such but the African is wonderfully adept with his hands and has a keen mind. Under the supervision of the mission doctor he soon learns enough to become an efficient and dependable assistant, and a few are able to perform operations which would do credit to any graduate of a school of surgery.

And what is planned for these medical men? Perhaps from this college which has been mentioned above will come men capable of carrying on medical studies in the United States and Europe. Perhaps among the tiny thatch schools in the Cameroun bush there are boys today who will be the future heroes of the continuing fight against disease and superstition in Africa—some African Pasteur or Osler who will live among his people to set them free from their tropical scourges.

So once again we see the building half erected reaching out appealing fingers to the brilliant sun of Africa's dawn, crying for release from the horrors that still make that continent the "open sore of the world" as well as the "open door of the world." The task is

still unfinished, the work so magnificently done must continue.

In this brief and necessarily imperfect way the main phases of the mission work in the Cameroun have been reviewed. Around these three main emphases—preaching, teaching, and healing—the activity of the Christian mission operates. Much more could be said of the Frank James Industrial School and the Halsey Press at Elat as part of the program to educate Christian youth for participation in a new world economy, or of the stimulus to the development for good literature which has come by the recent publication of the whole Bible in Bulu by the American Bible Society, or concerning the emphasis in home and family life where a total Christian approach is proposed and demonstrated for the town and tribe. Different as much of this is from the plain, massive foundations which were laid years ago, it is built of the same materials—of the cement of the gospel and the pure sand of the African heart rearing magnificently the kingdom of God in the hearts of African men and women. The conflict in North Africa has been far enough away from the Cameroun to have no direct effect on the life of the community, although no colony in Africa is left without indirect repercussions. Africa after the war is not going to be Africa as it was before the war. The freedom which nations have been fighting for is not to be delegated to the few favored peoples of the world—and Africa knows it. It is an awesome thing to ponder on the purposes of God working within the men and women who are moulding the future of Africa, before our very eyes. If we prove false to this purpose of God or fail through lack of vision, the future people of Africa may rise to condemn us. If with all justice, mercy, and truth we help to save Africa for the African, help him to assume the responsible leadership which is his inalienable right in this world's governments, help free him from the blights of disease and superstition, and above all win him by Christ's love to sonship of the Father with us as brothers, we shall rest in the knowledge that future generations will rise to call us blessed.

